

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 KUALA 05174 311125Z

11

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-05 L-01 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 /061 W  
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P R 310905Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8255

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 5174

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT MY

SUBJ: SARAWAK OPPOSITION LEADERS ARRESTED

REF: A) KL A-148, 10/28/74

B) KL 4042

1. SUMMARY: OPPOSITION SARAWAK NATIONAL PARTY (SNAP) LEADERS, INCLUDING DATUK JAMES WONG, WERE ARRESTED OCT. 30 FOR ALLEGED "ANTI-NATIONAL" ACTIVITIES, PRESUMABLY INVOLVING BRUNEI CLAIM TO SARAWAK'S LIMBANG TERRITORY. ARRESTS BY FEDERAL AUTHORITIES AT BEHEST OF SARAWAK STATE GOVT SIGNIFY CRACKDOWN ON SNAP WHICH GARNERED APPROX 40 PERCENT OF VOTE IN AUGUST ELECTIONS IN STATE AND EMERGED AS STRONG CHALLENGE TO NATIONAL FRONT GOVT OF CHIEF MINISTER DATUK RAHMAN YA'KUB. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBOFF INFORMED BY KUCHING SOURCE THAT SIX SNAP OFFICIALS, NOTABLY PARTY VICE PRESIDENT JAMES WONG AND FORMER MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR LIMBANG AWANG BUNGSU, WERE ARRESTED OCT. 30 AND REMOVED TO DETENTION IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA ON CHARGES OF  
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PAGE 02 KUALA 05174 311125Z

"ANTI-NATIONAL ACTIVITIES", SPECIFICS OF WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN

MADE PUBLIC. GOVT NEWS AGENCY BERNAMA IN REPORT APPEARING IN KL DAILIES OCT. 31 STATES THAT WONG AND OTHERS DETAINED UNDER SARAWAK'S PRESERVATION OF PUBLIC SECURITY REGULATIONS, ACTING INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF POLICE HANIFF OMAR TOLD BERNAMA THAT WONG'S DETENTION NECESSARY "FOR SECURING PUBLIC SAFETY." THESE ARRESTS FOLLOW DETENTION OF FOUR OTHER RESIDENTS OF LIMBANG TERRITORY, INCLUDING ONE SNAP PARTY WORKER, TWO WEEKS AGO, ALLEGEDLY ON CHARGES OF STIMULATING ANTI-GOVT FEELING THERE.

3. IN AUGUST GENERAL ELECTIONS, SNAP GARNERED AVERAGE 40 PERCENT OF POPULAR VOTE IN SARAWAK, EMERGING AS STRONGEST REGIONAL OPPOSITION TO RULING NATIONAL FRONT (NF). DURING ELECTION CAMPAIGN, RAHMAN YA'KUB ACCUSED SNAP OF DISLOYALTY AND ACCEPTING MONEY FROM "FOREIGN SOURCES", IMPLICITLY BRUNEI (REF B). NF ALSO ATTACKED JAMES WONG'S STAND ON BRUNEI CLAIM TO LIMBANG TERRITORY BECAUSE OF WONG'S INSISTENCE THAT RELATIONS WITH BRUNEI SHOULD BE HANDLED BY FEDERAL GOVT AS FOREIGN AFFAIRS MATTER, RATHER THAN BY RAHMAN YA'KUB WHO HAS MADE INFLAMMATORY STATEMENTS ON BRUNEI RELATIONS IN RECENT MONTHS (KL A-86, 6/20/74). DURING JULY SESSION OF NATIONAL PARLIAMENT, WONG ALSO ACCUSED SARAWAK GOVT OF CLANDESTINELY CIRCULATING ANTI-BRUNEI LITERATURE IN BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN AND OTHER AREAS IN BRUNEI, A CHARGE THAT PRIME MINISTER RAZAK DENOUNCED AS "MALICIOUS MISCHIEF".

4. RE BRUNEI, DEPUTY BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER IN BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN (MOFFATT) IN MEETING WITH DCM OCT. 24 SAID THAT RAHMAN YA'KUB IN POST-ELECTION PERIOD HAS CONTINUED TO STIMULATE ANTI-BRUNEI SENTIMENTS DURING PUBLIC MEETINGS IN LIMBANG AND OTHER AREAS CONTIGUOUS TO BRUNEI. MOFFATT ALSO SAID THAT PAMPHLETS AND TAPE RECORDINGS CALLING FOR END TO POLITICAL OPPRESSION WERE BEING CIRCULATED IN BRUNEI. TAPES WERE OSTENSIBLY MADE BY AZAHARI, LEADER OF BRUNEI PEOPLE'S PARTY WHICH HAS HEADQUARTERS IN KL MOFFATT REMARKED THAT BRUNEI SPECIAL BRANCH BELIEVES THESE MATERIALS WERE INTRODUCED INTO BRUNEI WITH COMPLICITY OF SARAWAKIANS.

5. COMMENT: WONG'S POSITION THAT SARAWAK GOVT SHOULD NOT STIMULATE PROBLEMS WITH BRUNEI OVER LIMBANG CLAIM HAS MADE HIM VULNERABLE TO CHARGES OF DISLOYALTY, BUT WONG HAS NOT SPOKEN OUT PUBLICLY ON BRUNEI ISSUE IN PAST TWO MONTHS.  
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PAGE 03 KUALA 05174 311125Z

ALSO, WONG HAS BUSINESS INTERESTS (TIMBER MARKETING) IN BRUNEI AS WELL AS SINGAPORE, LEAVING HIM OPEN TO CHARGES THAT "FOREIGN MONEY" WAS USED IN SNAP ELECTION CAMPAIGN. ONE HYPOTHESIS RELATING TO THESE ARRESTS IS THAT SARAWAK GOVT AND GOM ARE USING BRUNEI ISSUE TO CURB SNAP IN VIEW OF SUCCESS IT HAD IN RECENT GENERAL ELECTIONS AND GROWING SNAP POPULARITY AMONG RURAL IBAN COMMUNITY (REF A). WONG'S ARREST WILL CREATE POLITICAL RIPPLES, ESPECIALLY IN NEW PARLIAMENT

SESSION BEGINNING NOV. 5 WHEN OPPOSITION POLITICIANS WILL  
ALMOST CERTAINLY TAKE UP CUDGELS FOR HIM AND SNAP, AND GOM  
WILL HAVE TO BE PREPARED TO BACK UP SNAP ARRESTS PUBLICLY  
WITH SPECIFIC CHARGES OF WRONGDOING.  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** ARRESTS, POLITICAL LEADERS, OPPOSITION PARTIES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 31 OCT 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** boyleja  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1974KUALA05174  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D740311-0383  
**From:** KUALA LUMPUR  
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**Line Count:** 120  
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**Office:** ACTION EA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** A) KL A-148, 10/28/74  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** boyleja  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 26 JUN 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <26 JUN 2002 by martinml>; APPROVED <12 MAR 2003 by boyleja>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** SARAWAK OPPOSITION LEADERS ARRESTED  
**TAGS:** PINT, MY  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005